Social justice in the narratives of (CG) practitioners – an absent, empty or floating signifier?
A few remarks on research difficulties

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The structure of the presentation

- Research method
- Results and difficulties with data collecting process
- Possible interpretation
- General remarks
Research questions and methods

• How is *social justice* perceived among Polish CG practitioners?

• Is the concept of social justice present in the daily activities of Polish CG practitioners?

• What kinds of theoretical assumptions can be identified as a background for CG practitioners concepts of social justice?

15 semi-structured (narrative) interviews
Avoidance

I’ve never thought about social justice and I don’t have any clue what it could mean for me (A-2)

I do not know what justice could mean to me because I do not know how to decide what is just and what is not... I have too many doubts about society and individuals and... I prefer not to think about these big issues... I do have some values in my work but I don’t want to think of justice... at least now, I don’t want to. (A-8)
Inconsistency

My clients, they have to struggle with their lives, their disabilities and difficulties with the labour market... I think that what is happening to them is not just (A-12)

Later:

people should not have the same opportunities because they differ... I don’t think it’s just to support one particular group while other groups have to deal with lives without any help ... it’s not just (A-12)
separable or even opposite values

people should have more liberty form the state and from society... so that they could make their own decisions (A-5)

but:

the state is needed to... provide.... It should be written in the law that people should help each other because of the lack of such kind sensitivity among citizens (A-5)
individual and discourses

Individual looking for discourses

link between individual and society

individual represents various discourses

Social justice discourse itself
empty or floating signifier?
Conclusions

- research on social justice requires a solid theoretical background
- research methods should not be limited only to the interviews
- cultural, historical, political and ideological impacts on society, including educational impacts should be analysed
  
  discourse analysis, including logisc analysis
Thank you for your attention

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Professional advocacy as a key competence in career guidance education in Norway and Denmark

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Bo Klindt Poulsen, Senior lecturer, VIA University College & Doctoral student at Aarhus University, Denmark
Why this study?

2 major reasons:

• The NICE Professional Role of ”Social Systems Intervener & Developer”

• A broad Nordic self-understanding of career guidance as (also) advocacy and social engagement
NICE Professional Roles

Being an agent of change:

“Social Systems Interveners & Developers, from the agentic perspective of societal design, view social systems as formable environments for individuals, which are characterized by interpersonal relations and which may be developed through networking, advocacy, negotiation, coordination and community building.”

(NICE, 2012, p. 51)

“(…) making a difference in education and work related environments through networking, consultation and advocacy”

(ibid., p. 53)
Examples of learning outcomes (core competences)

Programme & Service Managers are competent in...
• marketing/ advertising CGC services and organisations
• leading colleagues and cooperating with significant stakeholders
• developing capacity for handling change and organisational development

Social Systems Interveners & Developers are competent in...
• making arrangements with stakeholders with-in systems
• approaching and intervening existing networks and communities and building new ones
• coordinating activities of different professionals
• collaborating with different professionals
• advocating and negotiating on behalf of their clients in relevant contexts
• mediating conflicts between clients and their social environments
Nordic self-understanding

• Context of the Nordic welfare society

• Legally mandated right to career counselling

• Societal compensation

• Proactive CGS – focus on prevention

(cf. Plant, 2003; Andreassen et al., 2019)
How do we do it?

- Preliminary reading of literature on advocacy and agency
- Work meeting in Bergen, Norway, February 2019 → discussion seminar on agency and advocacy with university teachers within other professions (social worker, basic education, nurse, teacher)
- Reading of curricula and steering documents for CG programmes in Norway, Denmark and Sweden*
- Online discussion meetings
Advocacy and agency

The concept of professional advocacy includes seeking change, securing and promoting social justice, systematically influencing decision making at system levels and shaping social and political outcomes (Mellinger, 2014).

Agency as a precondition for advocacy

”...an ecological conceptualisation of agency that emphasises the importance of both agentic capacity and agentic spaces in shaping agency, and moreover views the achievement of agency as a temporal process” (Priestly, Biesta & Robinson, 2015, p. 2).

“a definition of professional agency as exercised when professional subjects and/or communities exert influence, make choices, and take stances on their work and professional identities” (Eteläpelto et al., 2013, p. 61).
Agency: a preliminary model

Agency space(s)

Take stance
Make choices
Exert influence

Society

Individual

Macro

Organisation

Knowledge

Meso

Inspired by Priestly, Biesta & Robinson, 2015, & Eteläpelto et al., 2013.
What did we find?

- System and policy
- Own organisation
- Own practice
- Counsellor
Councellee

Norway:
To lead processes of change related to the counsellee (individually and in groups)
To lead and guide the counsellee in developing competences for change and action

Denmark:
To communicate professional and organisational strategies for developing the participants’ career management skills (non-mandatory course)
To apply career guidance methods that support the choices and processes of different adults (non-mandatory course)
Own practice

Norway
- Systematically evaluate and develop their own practice
- The ability to choose/adapt methods that suit the counsellee’s situation
- The ability to reflect on their own practice and professional experiences

Denmark
- To demonstrate an overview over and insight in selected theories, methods and forms of practice
- To analyse and evaluate the scope of different approaches in career guidance
- To formulate suggestions on supervision, analysis and management of career guidance processes
- To identify new perspectives on own practice and suggest competence enhancement and further education
- To develop and implement decisions on career guidance activities within the legal framework and the ethics of the profession
Own organisation

Norway

To take initiatives to changes in their organisation
Knowledge of strategies for innovation in organisations
The ability to communicate, collaborate and coordinate within the organisation

Denmark

To communicate professional issues and reflections to internal and external collaborators
To handle the organisation and development of career guidance activities in an educational institutions (non-mandatory course)
To develop, begin, evaluate and use innovative career guidance activities (non-mandatory course)
System and policy

Norway
- Communicate, collaborate with other professionals
- Coordinating activities, networking
(Stakeholders – none)

Denmark
- To carry out professional and interdisciplinary coordination of and advocacy with (sic!) different social groups in regards to social justice
Cautious conclusions

And as with all great discoveries, this is just the beginning
Questions for discussion

• How is agency and advocacy in regards to career guidance professionals taken into account in your countries/programs?
• How can agency and advocacy be taught/learned?
• How do we (that is Inga & Bo) proceed from here? How do we come closer to agency and agentic practices in career guidance?
References


LEARNING FROM POLITICAL ECONOMY:
USING LACLAU & MOUFFET AND HARDT & NEGRI IN CAREER GUIDANCE PRACTICE

Presentation by Tristram Hooley to the Critical perspectives on agency and social justice in transitions and career development conference, Copenhagen, 23-24 October 2019.
The current political economy limits individuals’ ability to achieve the outcomes that career guidance promises them.

If we are going to allow people to self-actualise, exercise autonomy and access decent work we need to act on the structures alongside the individuals.

But, what does this look like?
YESTERDAY…

• I made the case that we were riding the social justice wave.
• I proposed the five signposts as offering us a useful starting point.
• I called for more theoretical and practical work and argued that it needed to be connected to wider struggles.
• So, where next?
THE FIVE SIGNPOSTS TOWARDS SOCIALLY JUSTICE CAREER GUIDANCE

1. Build critical consciousness  
2. Name oppression  
3. Question what is normal  
4. Encourage people to work together  
5. Work at a range of levels

The five signposts are inductive and represent an attempt to theorise the materials that emerged through the two-volume project.

They draw on wider theories, but don’t have a clear theoretical basis.

Moving the agenda forwards requires more theoretical, empirical and practical work.
Existing (individualistic) practices can be built on an extensive body of research and evidence, largely informed by psychology.

Yates’ new book provides an excellent example of a book that allows for a read through from discipline (psychology), to theory (e.g. gestalt theory), to intervention studies and then to tools and techniques.

This epistemology has been built up over decades and provides a powerful account of how people’s careers work and how we can help them.

The movement for social justice in career guidance does not have an equivalent depth.
ALTERNATIVE EPISTEMOLOGIES

3. "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" by Paulo Freire
4. "Foucault: Order of Things"
WHERE DO WE GO FOR NEW IDEAS?

Particularly ones that are focused on changing the world rather than just adapting to it?

The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.
Particularly to the study of social movements and political change.

How do things like economic systems change?

What actions and forces can bring such changes about?

How far can change be purposeful and deliberate?
Both are post-Marxist theorists of social change. Both draw on Marx and Gramsci. H&N are seen as revolutionaries, while L&M are radical reformists. As far as I know they have never talked about career guidance.
LA CLAU & MOUFFE: KEY IDEAS

- **Celebrate struggle.** Agonism/antagonism/struggle is central to societies. It is to be celebrated as a positive force. We have to disagree and challenge as a way to resolve differences. We will never arrive at the harmonious society.

- **Link struggles to the hegemony.** Understanding inequalities (subordination) and injustice (oppression) is not enough. We also need to link it to a larger pre-existing narrative (hegemony).

- **Recognise pluralism.** Truth and justice are plural and not owned by any individual or group (e.g. white people, the working class, women). Successful political movements are those that establish 'chains of equivalence' between various struggles.

- **Create a democratic imaginary.** Offer viable alternatives and create an imaginary of what an alternative society looks like.
HARDT AND NEGRI: KEY IDEAS

• **Empire.** The system of power and privilege is complex, diffuse and dynamic. It cannot be encompassed by a particular ideology (neoliberalism) or a particular institution (the state). Despite its complexity, it has built mechanisms for coordination.

• **Singularities.** We are all plural and unique. We all encompass multiple identities and inter-sectionalities.

• **The multitude.** The global population is comprised of multiple singularities. Yet, we can still conceive it as a political actor.

• **The common.** The wealth that is shared by the multitude. It can be geographical, material, intellectual, institutional and symbolic (e.g. the environment, open source code, the idea of social justice).

• **Assembly.** The process of bringing the multitude together to act to expand the common.
The system of underlying structures that govern a system.

It does not determine what is said (or thought or done).

But it shapes what it is possible to say (or think or do).
Career guidance is dependent on a folk grammar of concepts and approaches. These draw from a range of places e.g. Parsons (alignment of the individual with the labour market), Holland (vocational fit and types), Rogers (person-centred counselling, self-actualization), Savickas (life design, narrative).

Folk grammars are what we fall back on when we don’t know what to say. E.g. ‘what interests you’, ‘how does that make you feel’. They are the unconscious manifestation of epistemology.

Professional training is about inducting new people into an epistemology and helping people to transform it into an (unconscious) folk grammar.
CHANGING THE GRAMMAR

• This folk grammar is arbitrary.
• Its dominance for career development has been established historically and epistemologically.
• It carries with it a lot of assumptions and constructions of what sorts of problems and answers are legitimate.
• The work of Laclau & Mouffe and Hardt & Negri offers us an alternative grammar.
• This does not mean that they offer a script that should never be deviated from.
HOW DO WE INTEGRATE THIS INTO CAREER GUIDANCE

Understanding the individual in context

• We are all individuals (singularities)
• But we are also part of the multitude

Analysing the situation that they find themselves in

• Understand and deconstruct Empire
• Recognise and celebrate antagonisms
• Exploring the resources offered by the common

Building transformative career strategies

• Develop chains of equivalence
• Link to the hegemony
• Assemble
• Create a future imaginary based around an expanded common.
THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO ‘DO’ CAREER GUIDANCE

“Career guidance supports individuals and groups to discover more about work, leisure and learning and to consider their place in the world and plan for their futures... Career guidance can take a wide range of forms and draws on diverse theoretical traditions. But at its heart it is a purposeful learning opportunity which supports individuals and groups to consider and reconsider work, leisure and learning in the light of new information and experiences and to take both individual and collective action as a result of this.” (Hooley, Sultana & Thomsen, 2018)

- Some approaches are likely to be more conductive to making use of these theories and doing social justice.
- I’ll illustrate with the example of a counselling conversation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contracting: Explain what this conversation is for.</th>
<th>Exploring the individual's career issues in context</th>
<th>Analysing the situation that they find themselves in</th>
<th>Building transformative career strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The session is about thinking about who you are and how you want to spend your time (singularities).</td>
<td>• Who are you? What is your identity? What do you want? (singularities)</td>
<td>• How do you see the world working? Where is it fair or unfair? How powerful are you? Who has power over you? (Empire)</td>
<td>• What would be the ideal environment for your future career (imaginary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is also about thinking about what kind of world you want to live in (imaginary)</td>
<td>• Who else is important to you? How are you linked to others? (multitude)</td>
<td>• Where are your interests in conflict with other people’s? Where are they aligned? (Antagonisms)</td>
<td>• Who are your allies? Who else is struggling? (Developing chains of equivalence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We will be linking these imagined futures to the possibilities that exist (linking to hegemony)</td>
<td>• How do you fit into the world? What are you concerned about? (Empire)</td>
<td>• What resources are available to you? And to everyone? (the common)</td>
<td>• How can you bring people together? What can unite them? (Assembling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What is possible? How does connect with the current world? (Linking to the hegemony)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT DOES THIS ACHIEVE?

• It constructs the problems and possibilities differently.

• It helps to focus discussions and thinking around the social but also keeps in view the possibility of social change.

• It encourages counsellors to give time and energy to the idea of changing the political economy.
so...

Does this make any sense?

Would it be useful to individuals?

Can these concepts be helpful?
CAREER GUIDANCE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
WEBSITE

https://careerguidancesocialjustice.wordpress.com
REFERENCES


• Parsons, F. (1909). *Choosing a Vocation*.


ABOUT ME

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ARTICULATING THE RATIONALITIES FOR CAREER GUIDANCE

A documentary analysis on Finnish national core curricula 1970-2014
CAREER GUIDANCE AS PANACEA FOR SOCIAL ILLS

- Problems
  - Delayed continuation to secondary and tertiary education
  - Considerable numbers of drop-outs
  - Late transitions to the work force
- EU solutions
  - Better career management skills
  - Career guidance

- Recent government platforms in Finland
  - 'Acceleration of transition to work force'
  - 'Consolidation of guidance and student welfare'
  - 'Preparatory education and guidance in transition phases to help students move on to the upper secondary level'
EDUCATION SYSTEM IN FINLAND

Doctoral degrees
Licentiate degrees
Universities

Master's degrees
Universities

Bachelor's degrees
Universities

Master's degrees
Universities or Applied Sciences

Bachelor's degrees
Universities or Applied Sciences

Vocational qualifications*
Vocational institutions

Specialist vocational qualifications
Further vocational qualifications
Initial vocational qualifications

Matriculation examination
General upper secondary schools

Preparatory education and training
General upper secondary schools

Voluntary additional year of basic education

Pre-primary education – 6-year-olds

Basic education
7–16-year-olds
Comprehensive schools

Early childhood education and care (ECEC)

Liberal adult education
Adult education centres
Folk high schools
Summer universities
Study centres
Sports institutes
DESPITE THE EXTENSIVE SYSTEMS OF CAREER GUIDANCE, IN FINLAND ...

- 12% of 15–29 year-old young adults NEETs (2017)
- The age of graduation from upper secondary education is high
  - vocational programmes 24 years, EU average 21 years
  - general programmes 19 years, EU average 18 years
  - One in four vocational students do not complete their upper secondary education within two years after expected graduation.
- The proportion of tertiary-educated young adults (at the age of 25–34) (41%) is below the OECD average (44%).
  - 67% of applicants for entry to first-degree tertiary education are rejected in Finland, the OECD average being 30%
  - 25% of upper secondary graduates manage to continue their tertiary-level studies immediately after graduation
NEW RATIONALITIES FOR CAREER GUIDANCE

Political rationalities (Rose 1999)

- Distinctive moral form
  - Nature and scope of legitimate authority, ideals or principles that should guide the exercise of authority
- Epistemological character
  - Understanding of the spaces, persons, problems and objects to be governed
- Distinctive language
  - Specialised vocabularies

New rationalities for career guidance

- Knowledge-based economy (Roberts 2013; Bergmo-Prvulovic 2014; Patton & McMahon 2006)
- Lifelong learning (Bengtsson 2015; Bergmo-Prvulovic 2014)
- Key competencies (Dale et al. 2016)
- Demand-led skills system (Watts 2013)
- New governance (Dale et al. 2016)
QUESTION?

• What kind of aims have been set down for career guidance in Finnish national core curricula for basic education 1971–2016?
  • What kinds knowledge, skills and attitudes career guidance and counselling is supposed to provide?
  • How these aims have altered in the course of time?
  • What are the rationalities for career guidance?

They cover the whole period since the Finnish comprehensive school reform (1971–1977) to present.

Education policy documents, such as national core curricula, include ‘serious authoritative verbal acts of experts’ (Simola 2015).

They express the ‘official truth’ on schooling in general – and career guidance in particular (Simola 2015).

They are practices ‘that systematically form the objects of which they speak’ (Foucault 1972).
KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY

1970: Dealing with unpredictable occupational future
"to tolerate with chance and uncertainty"
Articulated as difficulties in career choice or as a need to change occupation

1985: Occupations still considered as clear-cut
"introducing the occupational system"

1994: Internationalisation of work; guidance as prevention of early leavers

2004: Entrepreneurship as an alternative to occupation; guidance as prevention of NEET’s

2014: Individualization & responsibilization
"to increase individual understanding on work, occupations, entrepreneurship and competences needed in the future"
LIFELONG LEARNING

1970: Individual fact-finding; learning outside the classroom
   "to develop pupils’ skills to collect and process data"
   Problem-based, counsellor-centred guidance

1985: Career choice as a single decision to be made at the 9th grade

1994: Competences and skills needed career at career planning process
   Educational and career choices

2004: Life design perspective
   Personal capabilities, interests and hobbies
   Learning to learn skills

2014: Individual learner who is able to use various information-, guidance- and counselling services
EQUALITY / SOCIAL JUSTICE

1970: "Educational guidance": engagement, participation
   Teaching the same rules and norms for everyone; democratic decision-making

1985: Regulative emphasis: individual rights and responsibilities
   New aim for guidance: Gender equality

1994: Extension: Educational and gender equality

2004: Extension: Educational, ethnic and gender equality

2014: Extension: Justice, parity, equality, participation and prevention of social exclusion
NEW GOVERNANCE

1970: Strict, detailed top-down government
1985: Local emphases on curricula and guidance
    New duty: to follow up the admission to upper secondary education
1994: Local autonomy, demolition of old government
2004: New vocabulary: efficiency
2014: Extension: efficiency and effectiveness
    Guidance plan; evaluation on realisation of guidance plan
1990s Turn in Guidance Policy?

- Knowledge-based economy as obvious premise for guidance already in 1970s
  - Since 1990s: internationalisation work, entrepreneurship, individualisation
- Individual fact-finding as a 1970s premise for lifelong learning
  - Since 1990s: competencies, skills, ability to use information-, guidance- and counselling services
- 1970s regulatory emphasis
  - Implicitly: for the sake of equality/social justice?
  - Since 1990s: emergence of equality-vocabulary
- Strict, detailed top-down government of 1970s
  - Since 1990s: decentralisation, deregulation, emergence of efficiency-vocabulary
  - Evaluation of guidance?
REFERENCES


